AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A client/server system comprising a plurality of computers connected to a network, wherein:

a server on the network possesses button information which is data on menu buttons operating in connection with a client application introduced into a client computer, and the server has a function of transmitting the button information to the client computer; and

the client application comprises a program which causes the client computer to provide a function of communicating with the server to obtain the button information from the server, a function of displaying menu buttons on a display in combination with a GUI screen of the client application according to the button information obtained, and a function of performing operations defined for the displayed menu buttons.

2. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 1, wherein:

the GUI screen of the client application has an update button operated by a user to instruct the menu buttons to be updated; and

when the update button is operated, the client application transmits an update request to the server, and in response to the update request, the server provides the button information to the client application.

3. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 1, wherein:

the client application comprises an image viewer which causes the client computer to provide an image transmitting and receiving function and an image browsing function; and

the menu buttons are image transmitting GUI buttons for which a destination of an image is set.

4. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 1, wherein:

the server comprises:

a database which stores personal information on users who activate the client application to access the server; and

a distribution button determining device which determines contents of the menu buttons to be distributed to the users on the basis of the users' personal information; and

the button information on the menu buttons determined by the distribution button determining device is delivered to the client application.

5. (Original) The client/server system according to claim 4, wherein:

the personal information on the users is registered in the database using an online user registering function of the client application;

upon registration, each user is provided with a user ID which is a unique identification code; and

subsequent requests from the client application to the server are provided with the user ID so as to authenticate the user ID.

6. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 1, wherein:

an effective start date and time and an effective end date and time are set as parameters for the button information; and

the client application provides a function of displaying the menu buttons only during this period.

7. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 6, wherein:

the GUI screen of the client application has an update button operated by a user to instruct the menu buttons to be updated; and

when the update button is operated, the client application transmits an update request to the server, and in response to the update request, the server provides the button information to the client application.

8. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 6, wherein:

the client application comprises an image viewer which causes the client computer to provide an image transmitting and receiving function and an image browsing function; and

the menu buttons are image transmitting GUI buttons for which a destination of an image is set.

9. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 6, wherein:

the server comprises:

a database which stores personal information on users who activate the client application to access the server; and

a distribution button determining device which determines contents of the menu buttons to be distributed to the users on the basis of the users' personal information; and

the button information on the menu buttons determined by the distribution button determining device is delivered to the client application.

10. (Original) The client/server system according to claim 9, wherein:

the personal information on the users is registered in the database using an online user registering function of the client application;

upon registration, each user is provided with a user ID which is a unique identification code; and

subsequent requests from the client application to the server are provided with the user ID so as to authenticate the user ID.

11. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 1, wherein the button information includes button IDs as unique identification codes defined for the menu buttons, condition flags used to determine whether the menu buttons are enabled or disabled, action types which are condition flags used to determine operation of the menu buttons, and information used to identify images of the menu buttons.

12. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 11, wherein:

an effective start date and time and an effective end date and time are set as parameters for the button information; and

the client application provides a function of displaying the menu buttons only during this period.

13. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 12, wherein:

the GUI screen of the client application has an update button operated by a user to instruct the menu buttons to be updated; and

when the update button is operated, the client application transmits an update request to the server, and in response to the update request, the server provides the button information to the client application.

14. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 12, wherein:

the client application comprises an image viewer which causes the client computer to provide an image transmitting and receiving function and an image browsing function; and

the menu buttons are image transmitting GUI buttons for which a destination of an image is set.

15. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 12, wherein:

the server comprises:

a database which stores personal information on users who activate the client application to access the server; and

a distribution button determining device which determines contents of the menu buttons to be distributed to the users on the basis of the users' personal information; and

the button information on the menu buttons determined by the distribution button determining device is delivered to the client application.

16. (Original) The client/server system according to claim 15, wherein:

the personal information on the users is registered in the database using an online user registering function of the client application;

upon registration, each user is provided with a user ID which is a unique identification code; and

subsequent requests from the client application to the server are provided with the user ID so as to authenticate the user ID.

17. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 11, wherein:

the GUI screen of the client application has an update button operated by a user to instruct the menu buttons to be updated; and

when the update button is operated, the client application transmits an update request to the server, and in response to the update request, the server provides the button information to the client application.

18. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 11, wherein:

the client application comprises an image viewer which causes the client computer to provide an image transmitting and receiving function and an image browsing function; and

the menu buttons are image transmitting GUI buttons for which a destination of an image is set.

19. (Original) The client/sever system according to claim 11, wherein:

the server comprises:

a database which stores personal information on users who activate the client application to access the server; and

a distribution button determining device which determines contents of the menu buttons to be distributed to the users on the basis of the users' personal information; and

the button information on the menu buttons determined by the distribution button determining device is delivered to the client application.

20. (Original) The client/server system according to claim 19, wherein:

the personal information on the users is registered in the database using an online user registering function of the client application;

upon registration, each user is provided with a user ID which is a unique identification code; and

subsequent requests from the client application to the server are provided with the user ID so as to authenticate the user ID.

21. (Original) The client/server system according to claim 11, wherein:

the server transmits list information on button IDs of new menu buttons to be incorporated, to the client application which has requested the current menu buttons to be updated;

upon receiving the list information, the client application compares the button IDs described in the list information with the button IDs in the button information saved in a storage device of the client computer, and requests the server to obtain the button information on the button IDs described in the list information only if these button IDs are different from the button IDs in the button information; and

the server transmits the button information on the requested button IDs to the client application.

22. (Original) A button updating method of a client application, comprising the steps of:

constructing a client/server system by connecting client computers and a server together via a network;

storing, in a menu button information database of the server, button information which is data on menu buttons operating in connection with a client application introduced into each of the client computers;

activating the client application to communicate with the server to obtain button information therefrom;

displaying the menu buttons on a display in combination with a GUI screen of the client application according to the button information obtained; and

enabling operations defined for the displayed menu buttons.

23. (Original) The button updating method according to claim 22, wherein:

the button information includes button IDs as unique identification codes defined for the menu buttons, condition flags used to determine whether the menu buttons are enabled or disabled, action types which are condition flags used to determine operation of the menu buttons, and information used to identify images of the menu buttons;

the server transmits, to the client application which has requested the menu buttons to be updated, list information on button IDs of menu buttons to be incorporated;

upon receiving the list information, the client application compares the button IDs described in the list information with the button IDs in the menu button information saved in a storage device of the client computer, and requests the server to obtain the button information on the button IDs described in the list information only if these button IDs are different from the button IDs in the button information; and

the server transmits the button information on the requested button IDs to the client application.

24. (Original) The button updating method according to claim 22, further comprising the steps of:

activating the client application to register personal information on users who access the server, in a user personal information database of the server;

determining conditions for users to whom each menu button is distributed;

checking the personal information on the users registered in the user personal information database against the conditions to determine menu buttons to be distributed to each user; and

delivering button information on the determined menu buttons to the client application.

25. (Original) The button updating method according to claim 24, wherein:

the button information includes button IDs as unique identification codes defined for the menu buttons, condition flags used to determine whether the menu buttons are enabled or disabled, action types which are condition flags used to determine operation of the menu buttons, and information used to identify images of the menu buttons;

the server transmits, to the client application which has requested the menu buttons to be updated, list information on button IDs of menu buttons to be incorporated;

upon receiving the list information, the client application compares the button IDs described in the list information with the button IDs in the menu button information saved in a storage device of the client computer, and requests the server to obtain the button information on the button IDs described in the list information only if these button IDs are different from the button IDs in the button information; and

the server transmits the button information on the requested button IDs to the client application.

26. (Previously Presented) The client/server system according to claim 1, wherein the server automatically determines the menu button information to send to the client application.

27. (Previously Presented) The button updating method according to claim 22, wherein the server automatically determines the menu button information to send to the client application.

28. (New) An apparatus connected to a network, comprising:

a memory storing a set of instructions; and

a processor to execute the stored set of instructions to perform a method comprising:

accessing a server on the network;

obtaining button information from the server;

displaying menu buttons on a display based on the obtained button information, wherein the menu buttons are associated with pre-defined operations to be performed at the apparatus.

29. (New) An apparatus connected to a network, comprising;

a memory for storing button information representing data on menu buttons for operation with an application executed on a client computer and a set of instructions;

a processor to execute the stored set of instructions to perform a method comprising:

receiving a request for button information from a client computer; and

transmitting the button information to the client computer in response to the request.